

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

According to Wellek (1956: 83) literature is an expression of the real life in society. Based on that, literature reflected the social condition of the author's society. Include of that, literature as a personal expression of felling based of experience, idea, and motivation in the concrete description by using language. The author creates the work of art by taking their social life condition as the main source of their literary work. Every phenomenon in the author's social life is providing the issue and inspiration in creating a work of art. It is composed by the combination of real social life and mind of the author. One of the examples of literary work is play.

August Comte (1798-1857) made a systematic attempt to create about sociology by way of the scientific study of society. That means of all the societies able to develop through the following stages as religious, metaphysical, and scientific. It is because the social life should be built and when it is to achieve it should be maintained. Social influence in human life is a place in the community and recognized. Someone who is not recognized in the community will feel excluded and dispose of it everyone is trying to be accepted in society because humans are unable to live alone, have to socialize with others. Spencer (1877) explained that the basis of majority of sociology and arranged to emphasis that the sociological study of community consists of family, social control, politics, and industry. He also mentioned the sociological study of art and aesthetics. His emphasis is mainly on the inter-relations of the different elements and factors of the society. In addition, sociologies the analysis of the structure of social relationships as constituted by social interaction (The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, 2006). Social interaction could be by one person with their society.

Throughout the Victorian era movements for justice, freedom, and other strong moral values dominate opposed to greed, exploitation, and cynicism. In Victorian era concern in morality and one of the behaviors moral is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy may commentary over considerable immorality, thus maintaining the respectability of the person position of power. Hypocrisy also claims the practice of moral standard or beliefs of human behaviors. Based on that, is a measure of people that acts not consistent and always different all the time.

Moreover, that was a very important era and can be compared to the importance of the Oscar Wilde plays. Therefore, at 1983 Oscar Wilde made a drama with the title "*A woman of No Importance.*" It is one of popular melodrama of the late-nineteenth century literature. The play was premièred, on April 19th 1893 at London's Haymarket Theatre being success on the first performance. It has been perform on stages in Europe and North America since his death in 1900. It consists of four acts, played by nine actors with the main theme is the secrets, and satirizes English upper-classes society. In addition, it is about secret, decision, truth, prides and hypocrisy.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born on October 16, 1854 in Dublin, Ireland. Wilde is the second of three children born to Sir William Wilde and Jane Wilde. Wilde's mother interest in the neo-classical revival showed in the paintings and busts of ancient Greece and Rome in her home. In addition, she was a poet and loved made a sensation like Wilde her son. Furthermore, William Wilde as Wilde's father was Ireland's leading Otto-ophthalmologic surgeon and knighted in 1864 for his services as medical adviser and assistant commissioner to the censuses of Ireland, but he involved a sensation scandal. Wilde was baptized as an infant in St. Mark's Church, Dublin, and the local Church of Ireland.

Intended for three years he attended in Trinity College, Dublin, from 1871 toward 1874. At Trinity, Wilde established himself as an outstanding student: he came first in his class in his first year, won a

scholarship by competitive examination in his second, and then, in his finals, won the Berkeley Gold Medal, the University's highest academic award in Greek. In 1878, he moved to London and completed his university education at Oxford in classical studies. Wilde won the 1878 Newdigate Prize for his poem "Ravenna." In November 1878, he graduated with a double first in his B.A. of Classical Moderations and Literate Humaniores.

After graduation from Oxford (1878) Wilde returned to Dublin, married with Florence Balcombe as a childhood sweetheart in Bram Stoker and has two children. He wrote several books after traveling from Italy and Greece. His first book was a volume of poems (1881), and followed his first play too *Vera, or the Nihilists* was performed in the United States in 1891. Nevertheless, his first play was not well received, nor his volume of poem. He also became an editor of *Woman's World*, one of reputable publication. Wilde some collaboration works such as *The Centerville Ghost* (1887), *The Happy Princes and Other Tales* (1888), *The Point of Mr. W. H.* (1889), *A House of Pomegranates* (1891), *Lord Arthur Seville's Crime* (1891), and *Intention* (essay, 1891). Then, his important plays include *The Duchess of Padua* (1883), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Florentine Tragedy (La Sainte Courtesan)* (1893), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *Salomé* (1894), *An Ideal Husband* (1895), and the last of Wilde's plays to be written, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). Wilde's plays also have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright are.

A Woman of No Importance talked about a woman who became a single parent in Victorian Era. In addition, this drama told us about a serious protest against of Victorian gender inequality elaborately framed with perfect witticism. In Victorian era, at England a woman that became a single parent, birth illegitimate son received well in society. Nevertheless, whether she had an opportunity to be married women, she rejected and still pride being single parent.

This drama begins with a typical upper class party hosted by Lady Hunstanton in front of his terrace with small talk and social gossip. One-day Lady Hunstanton invited her friends to her country house and the story begins. Among them who are inviting, there was Hester, a young girl from America. She was Puritanism and not really like English custom that looked everything come from their social status. Lady Caroline also criticizes Hester's enthusiasm for Gerald Arbuthnot until Gerald himself enters to proclaim that Lord Illingworth, a powerful, flirtatious male political figure intends to take him under his wing as secretary. This is great news for Gerald, as being Lord Illingworth's secretary would be the young man's first step to a life of financial or political success. The guests then discuss the rumors surrounding Lord Illingworth's aim for being a foreign ambassador, while Lady Hunstanton sends a letter through her footman to Gerald's mother, inviting her to the party. She had attention on Mr. Arbuthnot, a young man who promoted to be Lord Illingworth's secretary, a promising diplomatic career. Although Lord Illingworth did not know that, his new secretary is his own son and vice versa. Since child, Gerald just knew that his own father died many years before (Oscar Wilde, 2006: 1-3).

In other side, Lady Caroline told Hester that it was not customary for a young woman that spoke with such enthusiasm of any person of the opposite sex. Lady Caroline belief that an English woman must be covered their feelings until they were married. Nevertheless, Hester disagrees with Lady Caroline because she believed that allow friendship to exist between a young men and young girl (Oscar Wilde, 2006: 2).

After that, Mrs. Allonby and Lady Stuffield enter the room and then followed by Kelvil. They talked about the one subject of national importance, the poorer classes of the country display a marked desire for a higher ethical standard. Then, Kelvil added that the growing influence of woman is the one reassuring thing in political life and women are always on the side of morality, public and private. Lady Hunstanton comment afraid because Lord Illingworth did not value the moral quality in moral

such as he should. After that, Lord Illingworth entered the room. Lord Illingworth expresses that he rather admires Hester's beauty and actually uses the conversation to assert his flirtations toward Mrs. Allonby, claiming that he has never met a woman so puritanical as Hester that she would resist his advances. Mrs. Allonby, Lord Illingworth has close friends that not really like Hester talked about a challenge, asked Lord Illingworth to kiss Hester (Oscar Wilde, 2006: 6-16).

Mrs. Arbuthnot arrived in drawing room at Hustanton when the end of an argument between Hester and the upper-class women. At that night, a secret appeared that Gerald is the illegitimate child of Mrs. Arbuthnot and Lord Illingworth. When Mrs. Arbuthnot met with Lord Illingworth her former lover, there known that Gerald was his illegitimate son. Mrs. Arbuthnot asked Lord Illingworth to do not bother her son. After that he went and met Hester, he tries to kiss Hester escapes in fury and hatred, Gerald was very angry with him. Then he had been angrier and wanted to kill him. Although when he knew, that Lord Illingworth was his own father, he very confused and cannot do anything again and just go home with his mother with many questions and disappointed. When they arrived in their house, Gerald asks explanation about her relationship with Lord Illingworth, but his mother for some time ago does not want to answer. For a moment, she answers that Lord Illingworth is his own father. She told how she met with Lord Illingworth's young and made her hurt by what Lord Illingworth had done before (Oscar Wilde, 2006: 18-50).

One day after, at Mrs. Arbuthnot's house Gerald expressed his regret do not become Lord Illingworth secretary, and wanted to send him a letter. In his letter, Gerald asked Lord Illingworth to marry his mother, which represented an obligation of him, which delay. Even Gerald forced his mother to accept but Mrs. Arbuthnot still refused it. When Gerald and Hester went out to walk along at garden, Lord Illingworth came to Mrs. Arbuthnot's house. He said that he got letter from Gerald, then he told his desire to marry Mrs. Arbuthnot. He proposed for Mrs. Arbuthnot to marry

him, and begged that he wanted to close to his son. However, Mrs. Arbuthnot refused that proposal and asked do not bother her son. Moreover, the left of Lord Illingworth from that house is not the end of this drama. The play ends by the idea of Hester, Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Gerald leaving to the USA to celebrate a happy wedding (Oscar Wilde, 2006: 51-65).

According to the writer *A Woman of No Importance* is an interesting drama. There are four aspects that make the writer be interested in this play. The first is *A Woman of No Importance* has uncommon story. The story seems to expose the hypocrisies at the heart of their shallow society, it is rarely in that years. The play is sheer comedy, that mock upper class point of view which has limited knowledge in the whole play. Second, this play has unique characters. Especially about Lady Caroline, she made her husband like a puppet. She took under control in household, and it is uncommon on Victorian era. Then, of course Mrs. Arbuthnot the main character of this play, she had strong character and pride of her condition, a single parent. The third aspect of interest in *A Woman of No Importance* is the value of this play. In Victorian era, having illegitimate son was a sin. Everyone was counted by their social status, not by what they ever did. The last aspect is the morality of hypocrisy, the main topic in this play. Single parent in England at that time was had a bad stereotype. Being single parent in a Victorian era takes much risk. They do not have a good reputation, and has no social status that very important at that time.

Based on the illustration above, the writer is interested to analyze this drama by using sociological of literature entitled **Hypocrisy of Victorian Morality Reflected in *A Woman of No Importance* (1893) By Oscar Wilde: A Sociological Approach.**

B. Problem Statement

In view of the background above, the main problem in this research is how Oscar Wilde criticizes hypocrisy in Victorian morality through in

drama with entitled *A Woman of No Importance*. Based on the problem statement, the writer formulates the research questions are as follows:

1. What is the social background of Victorian Era?
2. How hypocrisy is represented in the plays?

C. Objectives of the Study

Dealing with the problem statement above, the writer formulates the objectives of the study as follow:

1. To explain the social background of Victorian era in drama entitled *A Woman of No Importance*.
2. To describe the reason of hypocrisy depicted in plays entitled *A Woman of No Importance*.

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses this research in analyzing hypocrisy in Victorian morality reflected in *A Woman of No Importance* (1983) by Oscar Wilde on Sociological Approach.

E. Benefits of the Study

This research is achieved in order to have benefits as follow:

1. Theoretical Benefit

This research as theoretical benefits are to give more information, benefits, and give a contribution to development of the large knowledge especially in literary work on *A Woman on No Importance* by using sociological approach.

2. Practical Benefit

The writer suppose that this research will give some benefits to enlarge the literary study, give information among the students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, especially for student of English Department who manage themselves to increase their knowledge in analyzing drama with entitled *A Woman on No Importance* by using sociological approach.

F. Paper of Organization

The research paper of “Hypocrisy in Victorian Morality Reflected in *A Woman of No Importance* (1983) By Oscar Wilde: A Sociological Approach” is six chapters. **Chapter one** is Introduction, covering of Background of the Study, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objective of the Study, Benefit of the Study and Paper of Organization. **Chapter two** presents Literature Review. It consists of Previous Study and Underlying Theory (Notion of Sociology of Literature, Major Principle of Sociology of Literature, and Notion of Natural Destruction). **Chapter three** is Research Method. It consists of Object of the Research, Type of the Data and Data Source, Technique of Data Collection, and Technique of Data Analysis. **Chapter four** is Structural Analysis which include such as character and characterizations, setting, plot, theme, and style. **Chapter five** is Sociological Analysis of Oscar Wilde’s play *A Woman of No Importance*. **Chapter six** consists of Conclusion, Suggestion, and Pedagogical Implication.